new mexico architecture

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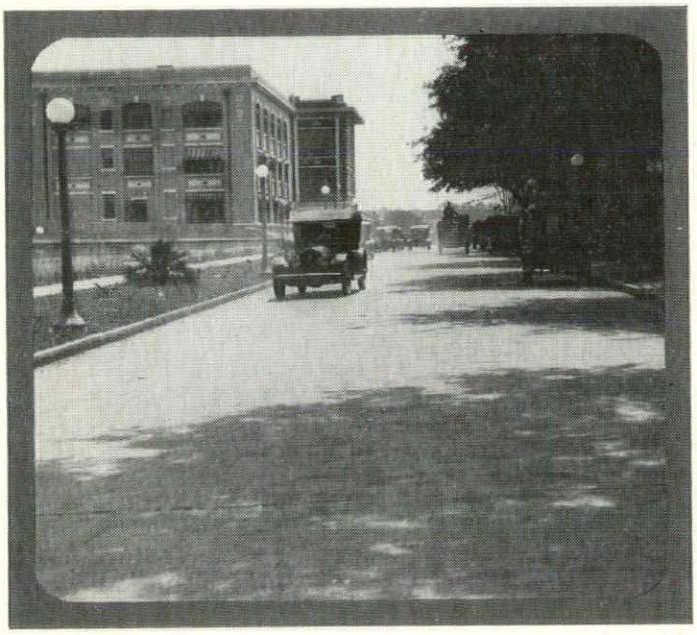
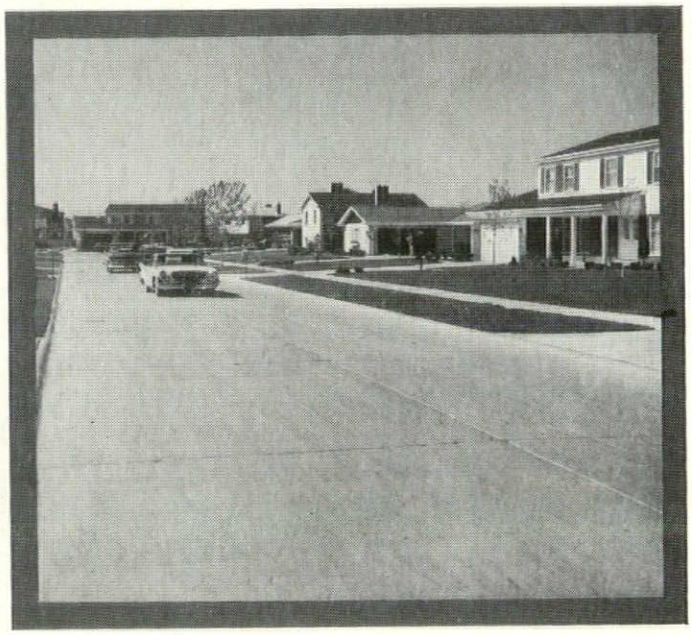


1916 Many early-day concrete streets such as this are still carrying traffic today



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*(Cover — Campanile, Wilshire Shopping Center, Roswell, N. M.
Herb Goldman, sculptor; Ken Cobean, photographer)*

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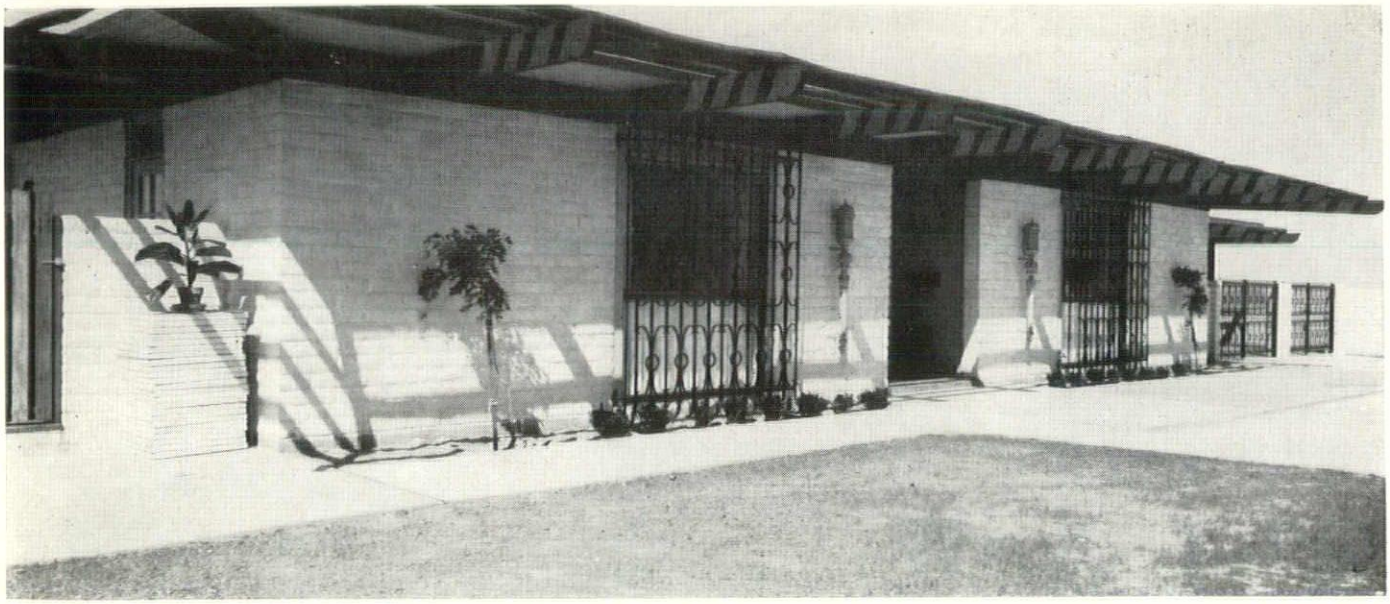

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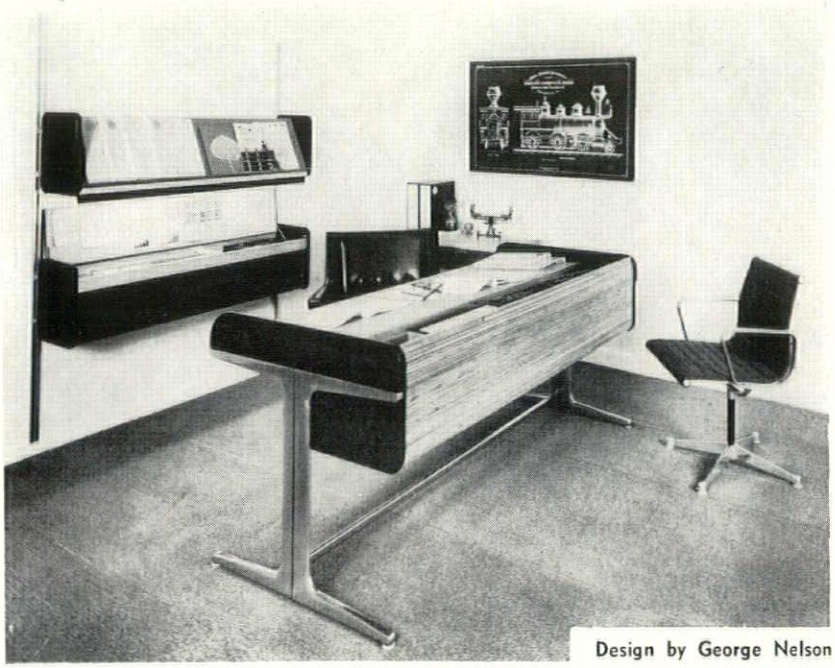

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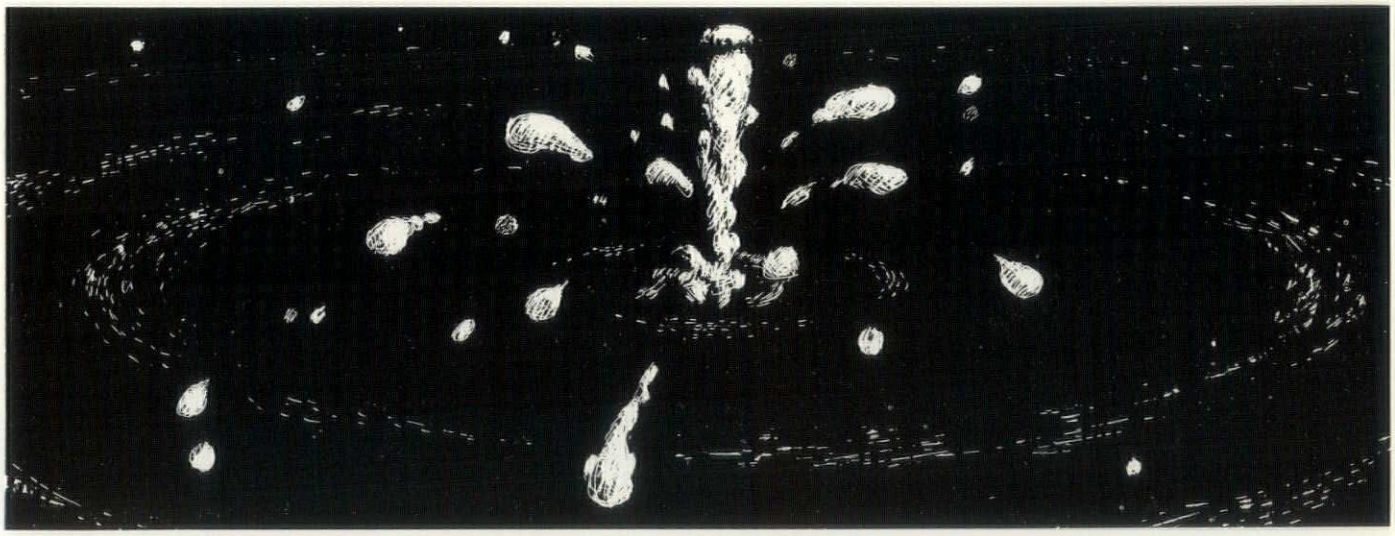

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SOUTHERN UNION GAS COMPANY

The New Mexico Arts Commission

The New Mexico Arts Commission, with John McHugh, AIA as Chairman, was created by the 1965 New Mexico Legislature to advise and assist on civic beautification, to foster appreciation for the fine arts, to make this state more appealing to the world, to encourage creative ability in the arts in the state, and to attract outstanding arts to the state.

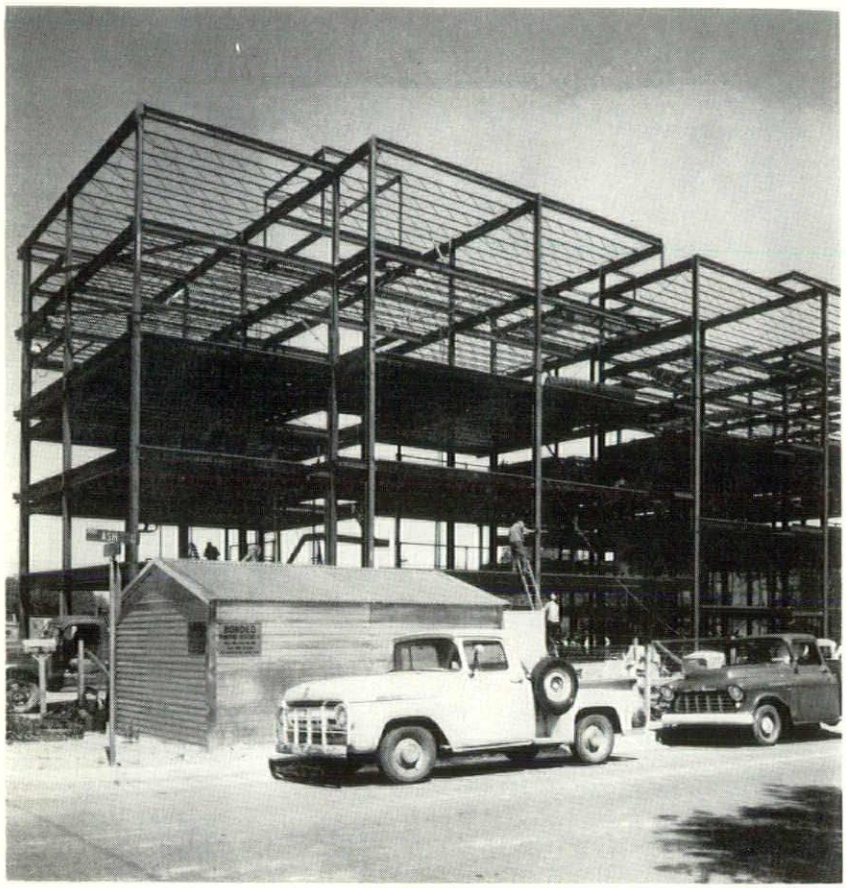
At the present time, the New Mexico Arts Commission has applied to Washington for funds to assist with grants-in-aid, under the new Arts and Humanities Act, for the promotion of progress and scholarship in the humanities and the arts through productions, projects, workshops, grants, fellowships, surveys, and research within the state. The Commission issues an attractive monthly Newsletter, the first issue of which appeared in mid-December, which includes a statewide Calendar of Cultural Events. The Commission will offer without charge to any community within the state revolving exhibits or do-it-yourself talks accompanied by colored slides on all phases of the arts. It also plans to sponsor speakers on such topics as art therapy in prisons, old peoples homes, orphanages, homes for the delinquent or retarded, and in hospitals. Shortly a radio program, "The New Mexico Arts Commission Presents," will be heard on the air to give people of this area, through the Library of Congress, the finest in the world's musicians and artists.

Already the New Mexico Arts Commission has arranged the purchase of a collection of photographs of old New Mexico buildings that have disappeared or will soon disappear. These will be used as part of a book on the state's unique architectural heritage.

For the Western Mountain Region AIA Conference in 1966, which will be held in Santa Fe, the New Mexico Arts Commission plans to arrange an architectural exhibit, and it anticipates presenting special awards for the best new buildings, for the best restoration, and for the individual bit of craftsmanship which has most contributed to the humanistic qualities of buildings or spaces.

C. James Cook, Administrative Secretary to the Commission.

Scene on Canyon Road, Santa Fe; sketch by John McHugh.



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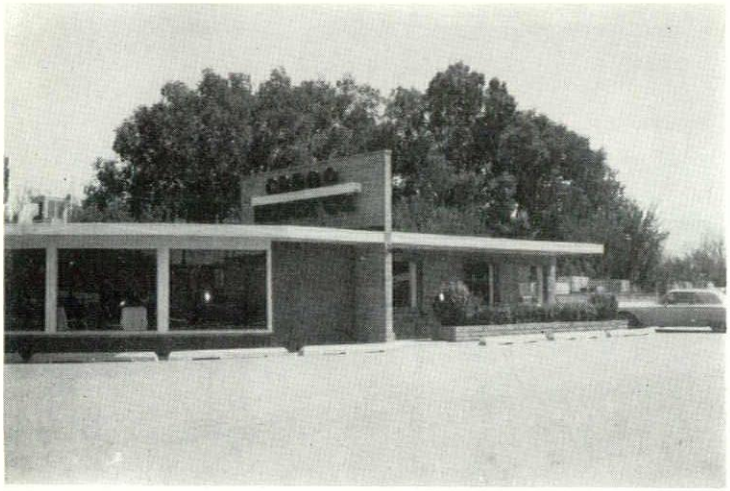

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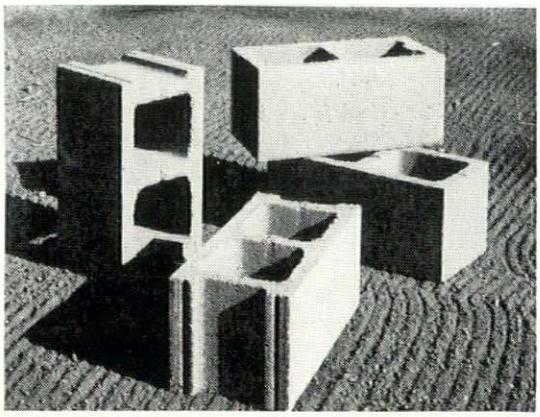


"I think that I shall never see, a billboard lovely as a tree."

IS THE BILLBOARD BLIGHT ABOUT TO BE CURED??

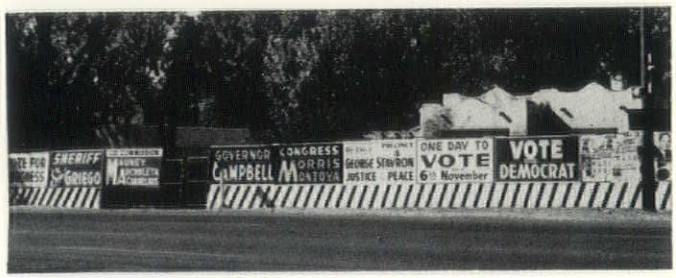
Congress has passed a bill which could lead to the elimination of billboards from great stretches of the nation's highways. Although the final bill was greatly watered down by pressures from the billboard industry, considerable progress is in sight for relieving our highways of their visual clutter.

President Johnson, for instance, wanted billboards controlled within 1000 feet of the 226,000 miles of the nation's interstate and primary roads. This distance has been cut to 660 feet. He had also asked that $100,000,000 a year (one-third of the Federal funds authorized) be used for construction of roads leading to or through scenic areas. This provision was eliminated from the final bill.

But Congressional action must be matched by state action; federal funds made available for the cost of billboard removal must be equalled by state funds. That means that the New Mexico Legislature must vote those funds. Our Legislature is now in session. Steps can be taken to implement the federal program.

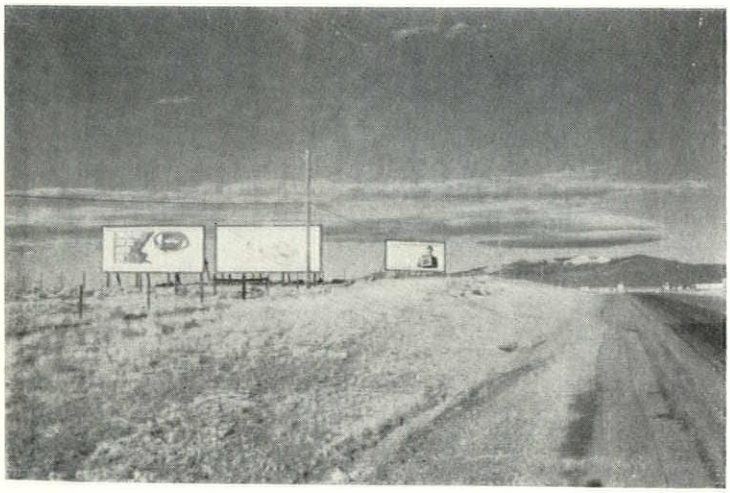
States must also agree to control billboards and to remove or screen junkyards along their Federal roads by January 1, 1968 or forfeit 10 per cent of their federal highway grants. Each state will receive

The candidates also confront us with eyesores.



"The squawks died out plenty fast when everybody saw the club bounce into the black."

Drawing by Stevenson, Copyright The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.



The beauty of nature and the infringements of man.

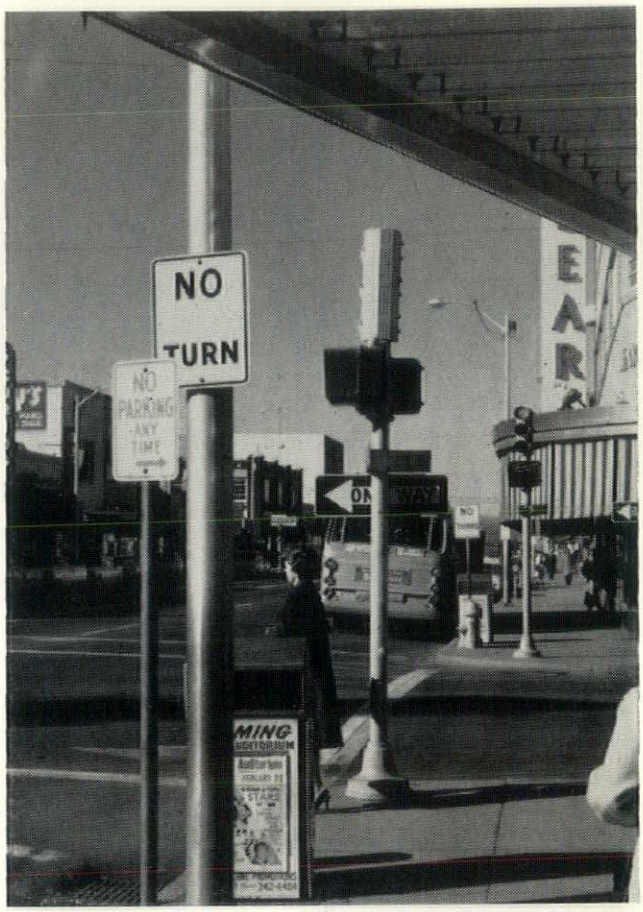
funds equal to 3 per cent of its highway construction aid to finance this beautification.

Certainly the billboard industry is not going to agree to the removal of their signs without a fight, and this industry has a powerful voice within the New Mexico Senate—Senator Gordon Melody. Senator Melody is one of the most respected members of the Senate, and he is the owner of the Melody Sign Company. He could increase his stature with the voters by pushing for the needed legislation.

But once again, *New Mexico Architecture* would like to say that while much offensive advertising is forced upon us as we drive along our highways, a considerable amount of valuable information to tourists is also presented on billboards. While we admit the need for local motel, restaurant, and sights-of-interest information for the traveler, we feel that the billboard jungle now put forward is downright ugly. In the September 1964 issue of NMA we presented one possible alternative to the unsightly billboard. We suggested that a booklet be prepared which would assist and guide the visitor through the state. It could include notes on historic and scenic sites as well as practical information, and it could be given to tourists at points of entry, at gas stations, and the like.

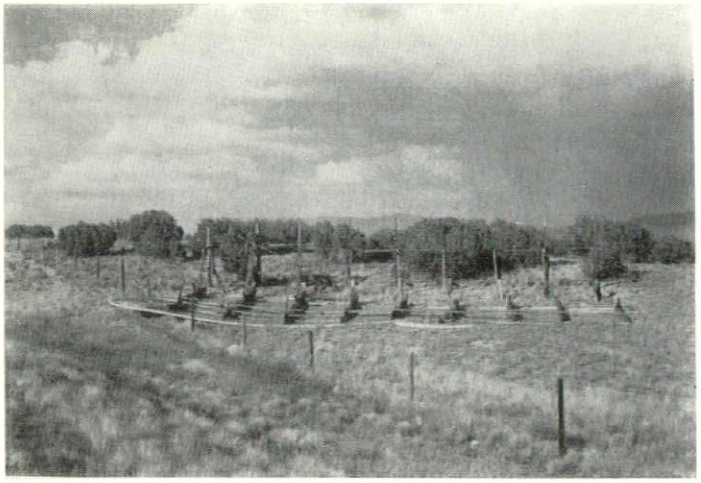
The New Mexico Society of Architects would like to offer its aid and to advise in the actual design of such a booklet. It would also aid the State Department of Development in a search for still other means of disseminating the useful information which billboards display.

Further, the Editors would like to see a program of "scenic roads" studied and implemented throughout the state. One such route was suggested in 1961 during the intensive study made of the Embudo Watershed by the Interagency Council for Area Development and the New Mexico Planning Office. Three other handsome guides to sections of northern New Mexico have been issued by *Landscape,* a magazine edited and published in Santa Fe. Entitled "Santa Fe to Taos and Return," "The Espanola Valley", and "Pecos and Villanueva," these guides point out items of artistic and architectural interest and

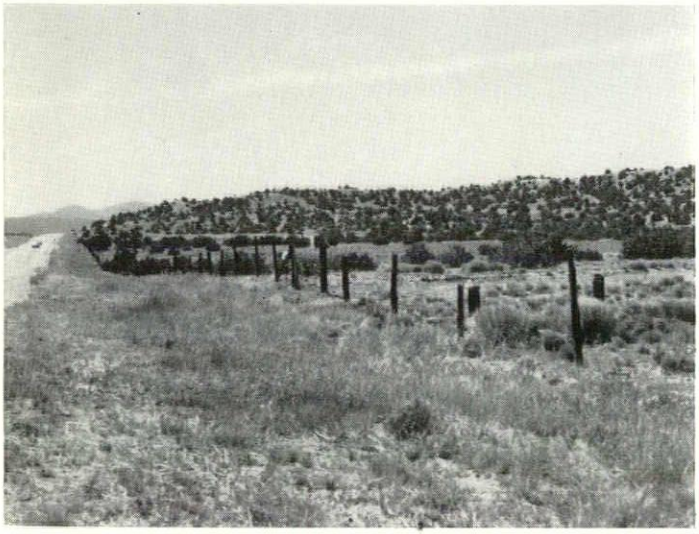


But billboards are only a part of the clutter; city officials must also begin to organize and to simplify the confusion of directional signs and trash cans.

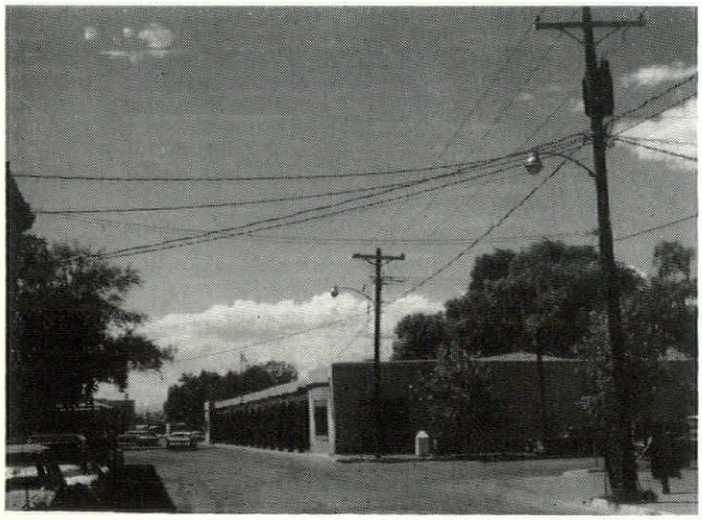
Just plain UGH!



The Vigilantes
rode out . . .



to put down outlaws
(and to clear the view).



The oldest city and
the newest wiring.

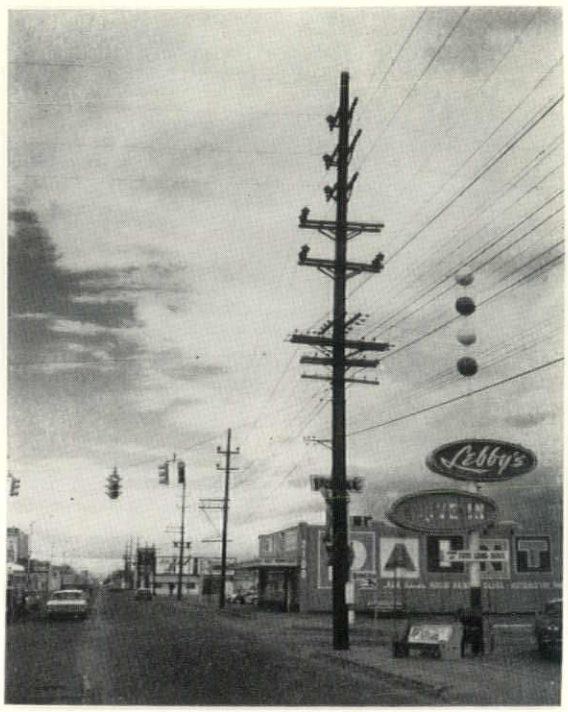
include comments on the ecology, economy and history of the area. Many other routes could be developed which would be of great educational and recreational benefit to tourists and to citizens of the state as well. How many thousands of tourists could be persuaded to linger an extra day or two in our extraordinary state to follow an interesting, out-of-the-way tour if only they knew about it!

But while we are cutting down billboards on the highways, what about the confusion of signs inside our city limits? The highway beautification bill which President Johnson has signed does not encompass the eradiciation of signs within our towns. Here the confusion is even worse—worse to the point where strident signs sometimes make the streets unsafe. It is often difficult to distinguish traffic lights from the chaos of signs, some with moving colored lights.

And those aerial cobwebs—utility wires. We admit that the cost of burial for utility lines is large. On the other hand, we are told that we live in an affluent society, and certainly such a society can find the ways and the funds to do an important job. We are also told that the maintenance costs of buried lines is higher than when the ugly things are allowed to swing about overhead. Yet when we observe what utility companies in other parts of the country have done in this matter, we wonder. The telephone company, on the other hand, has undertaken the burial of its lines. We wish to take note of this and to congratulate its directors publicly for this step forward.

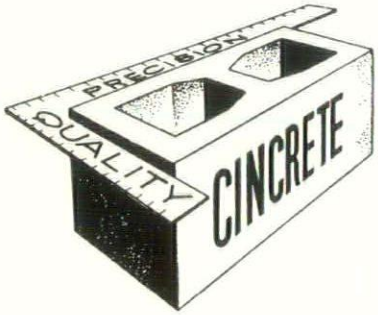
Perhaps a committee of interested persons, which would include representatives of the utility companies, should be appointed by the Governor to carry out a full investigation of the true costs of carrying power lines underground. Appraised of the facts, the people of the state could then take intelligent action.

We know that we are talking only about the cosmetics of environment, not about full and comprehensive planning. Certainly a continuing and comprehensive planning program is necessary and vital, but the face of New Mexico would look a little brighter right now if a touch of cosmetics were applied.—JPC-BB



The wires above us crisscross the city skyline like cobwebs woven by some giant, atomic-mutated spider.

But signs can inform and still be a part of—rather than an intrusion upon—the landscape.



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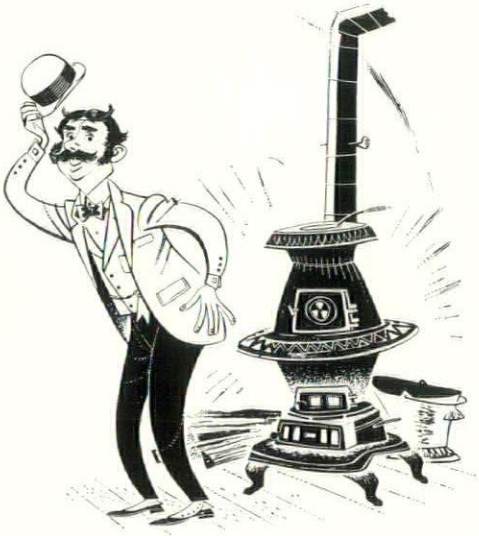
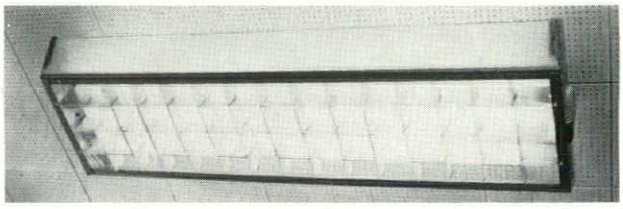


TODAY . . .

IT'S HEAT-OF-LIGHT



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The first annual awards banquet of the Albuquerque Chapter, AIA, was held on December 10 at the Alvarado Hotel in Albuquerque. Principal event of the evening was the presentation of honor awards to Albuquerque architects. As it was the first year for making awards, no time limit had been placed on the construction date of an entry. Jurors were: Thomas Vreeland, John McHugh, and John Tatschl.

FIRST ANNUAL AWARDS

Albuquerque Chapter, American Institute of Architects

Honor Awards

- **Flatow, Moore, Bryan and Fairburn**
  College of Education Complex
  University of New Mexico
  (see New Mexico Architecture, May 1963)

- **Robert Walters**
  Women's Dormitory, Highland University
  (see page 10)

Awards of Merit

- **Ferguson, Stevenson, Mallory and Pearl**
  Ideal Cement Plant, Tijeras Canyon, N. M.
  (See New Mexico Architecture, January 1961)

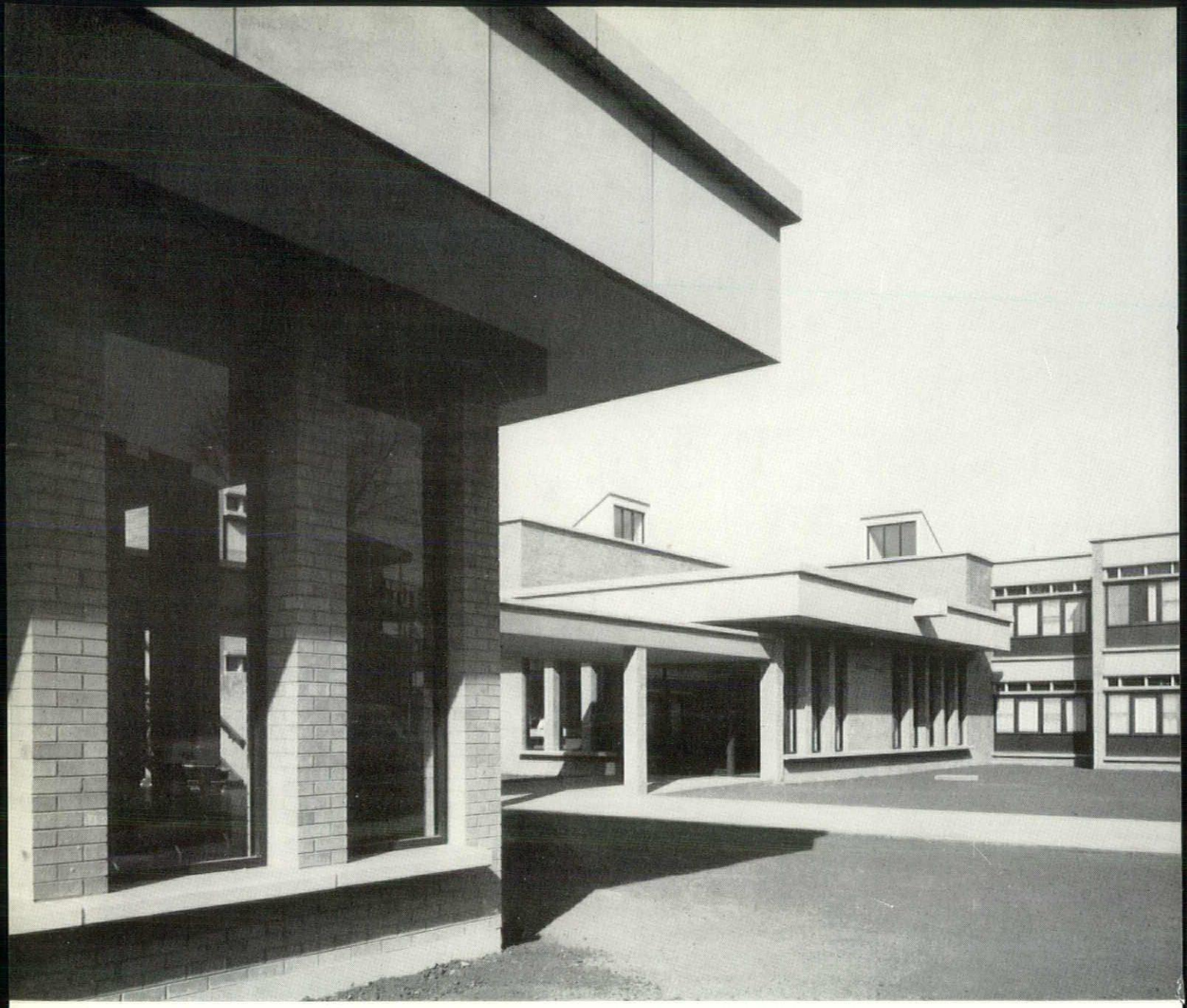
- **Harvey Hoshour**
  Unitarian Church, Albuquerque, N. M.

- **John Reed**
  Netherwood Apartments, Albuquerque
  (see New Mexico Architecture, July 1964)

- **Don P. Schlegel**
  John D. Robb Residence, Albuquerque
  (See New Mexico Architecture, September 1963)

- **George Wright**
  Great Ape House, Albuquerque Zoo

College of Education Complex
University of New Mexico

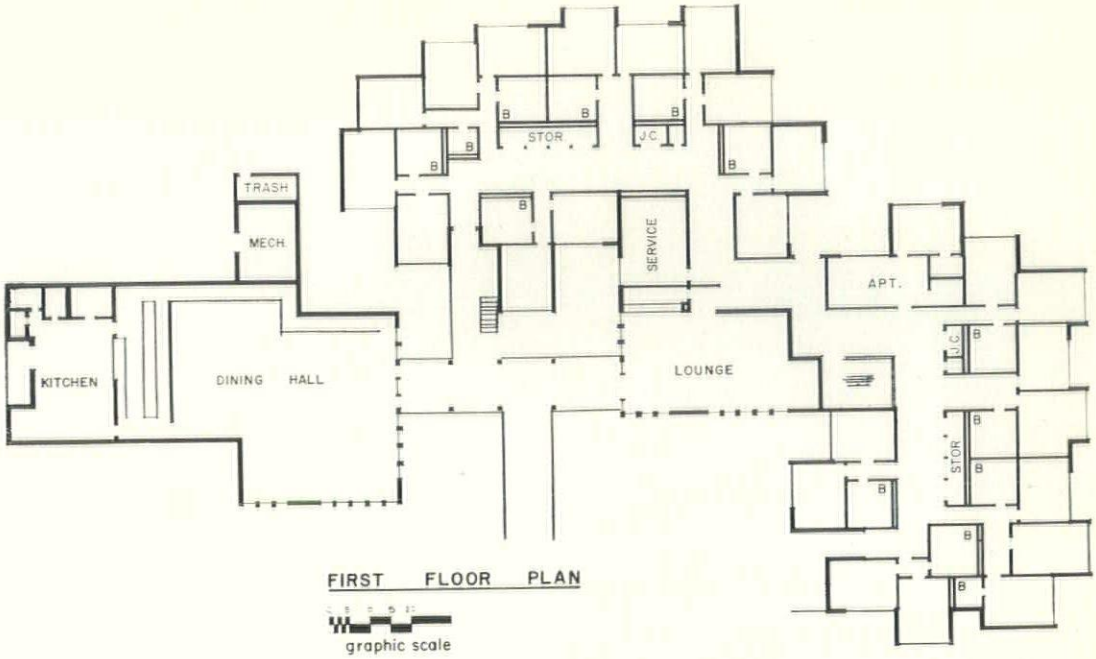


MELODY HALL . . . . . A Women's Dormitory

This dormitory for 100 women was completed in November 1965 for Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico. Built on a limited triangular site of less than an acre, the plan describes an irregular form. This irregularity is expressed by the rooms which show a changing space and outlook. The 12 foot-wide halls reduce the circulation to a length of 48 feet and are lighted by roof monitors which add variety and interest to the interior vistas. Each suite of two rooms houses four women and has a separate bath.

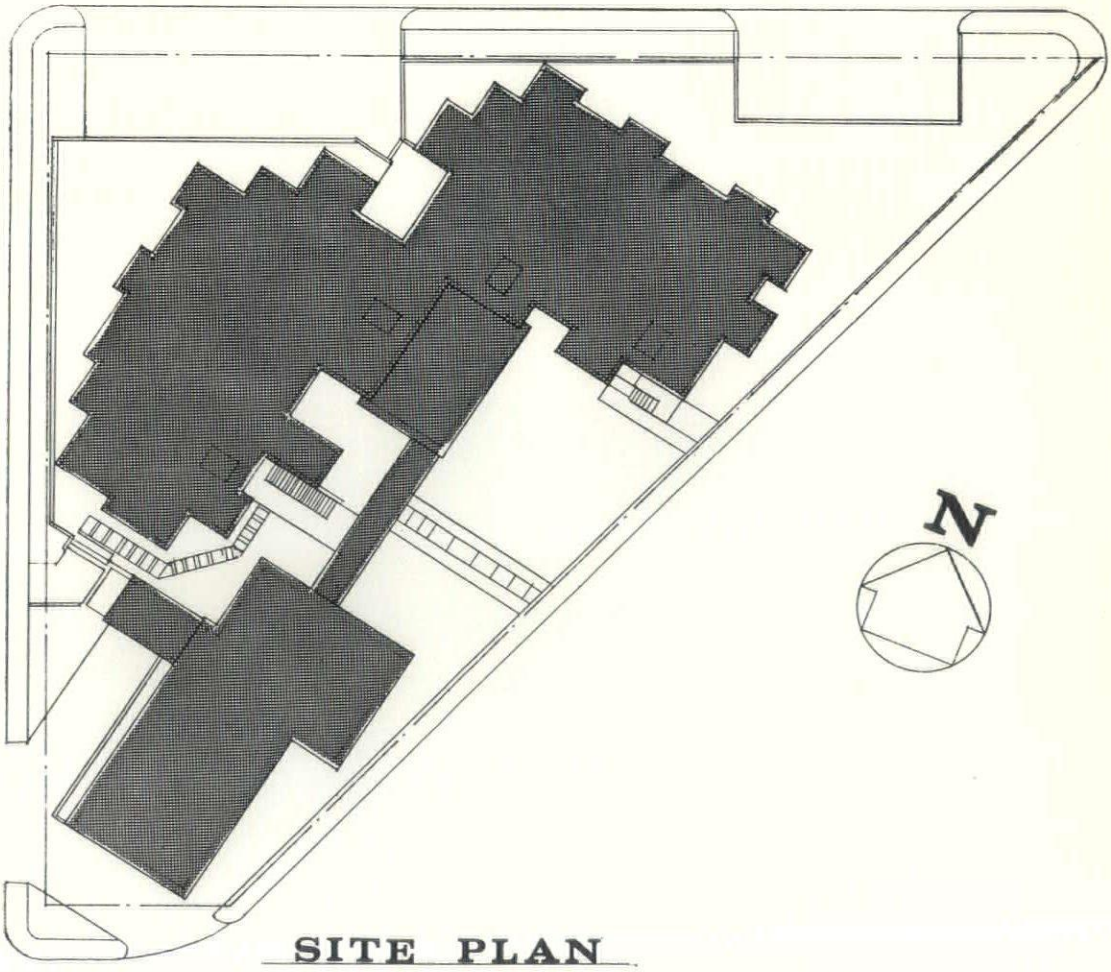
The basic construction is 12 inch brick bearing walls, precast concrete panels, and bronzed aluminum sash and doors. The dining hall seats 200

Robert Walters, A.I.A.
Architect

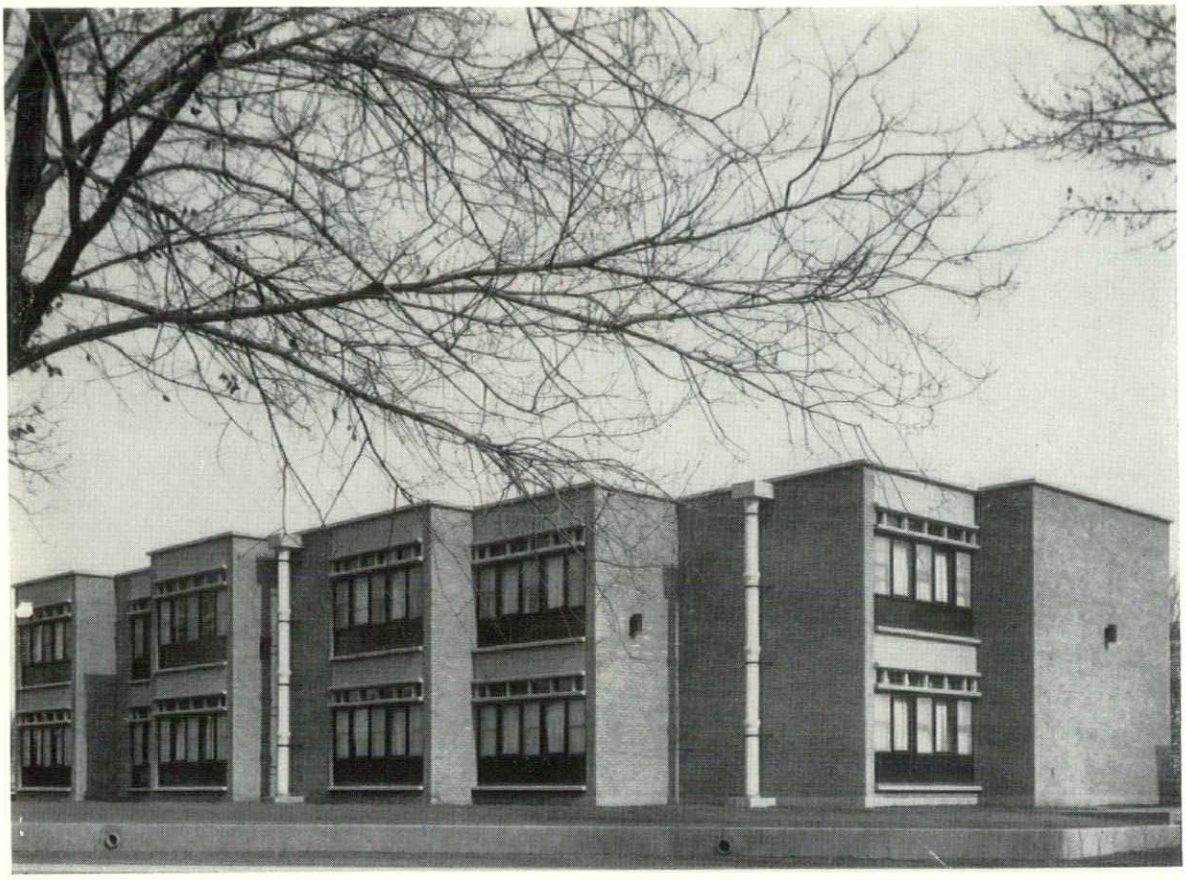


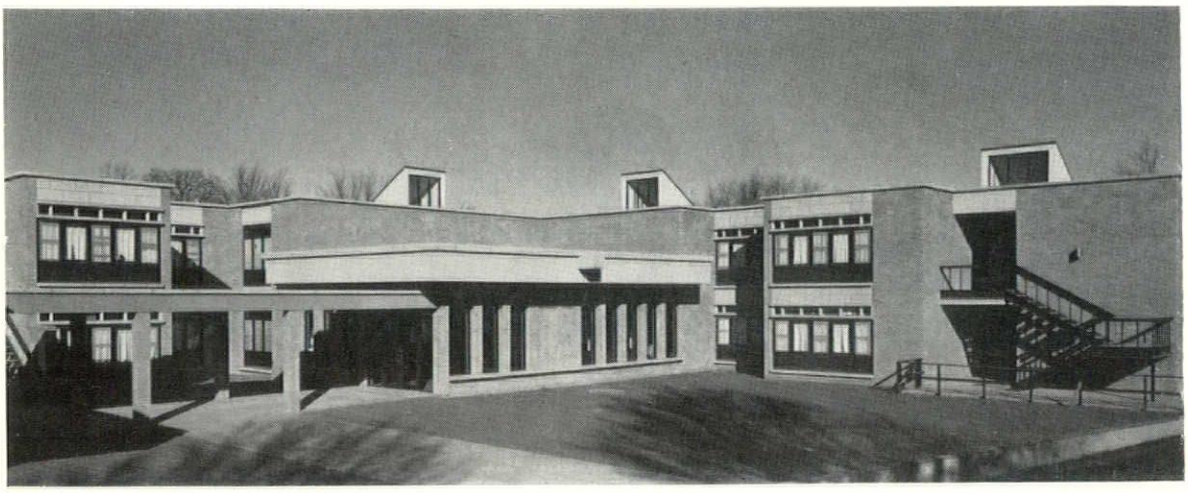
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

graphic scale



SITE PLAN

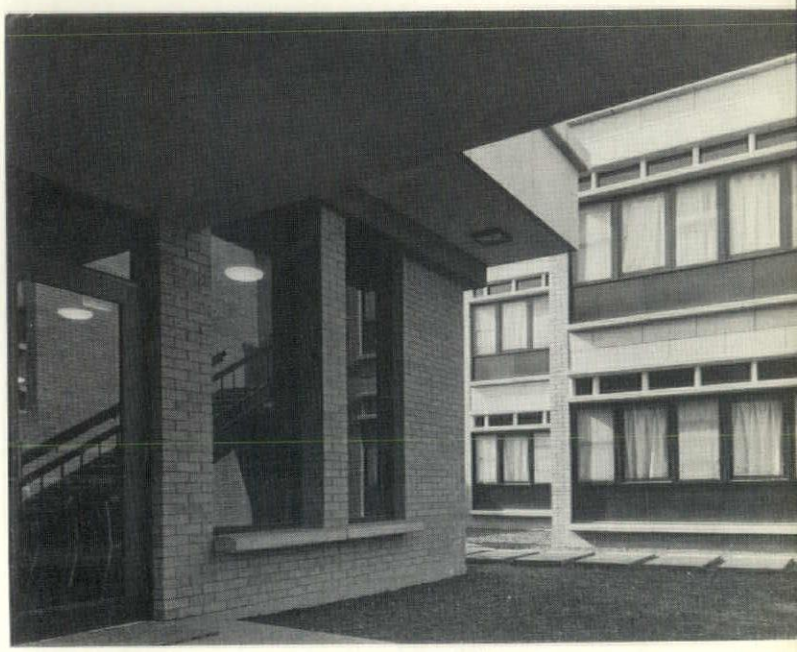




and is connected to the main lounge by an open, canopied walkway.

Construction cost was $16.00 per square foot.

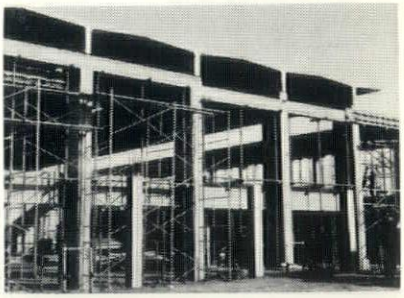
Melody Hall, named for Gordon Melody, state senator from San Miguel County, won one of the two Merit Awards given by the Albuquerque Chapter, AIA, at its annual awards banquet held early in December. (See page 9).



Jurors' Comments

The plan in particular was recommended for its non-regimented, informal grouping of the rooms around a corridor which, by virtue of its varied shape and occasional daylighting, becomes less a corridor than a place to meet and talk comfortably. The individual rooms are clearly expressed in the exterior form of the building. The whole group – dormitory, lounge, and dining hall – is arranged to form usable and pleasant spaces.

There was some criticism of the unnecessarily brutal forms of the exterior. In particular, the jury felt the architect had not taken advantage of corner views from the bed rooms which their loose disposition in plan would have permitted.



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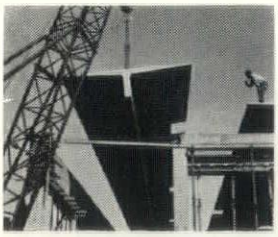

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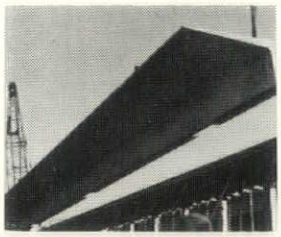

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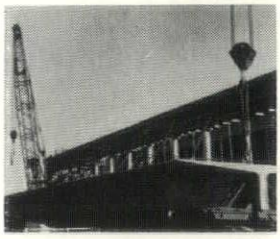

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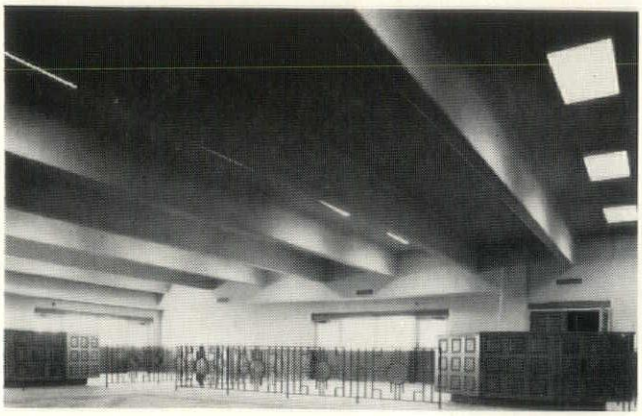

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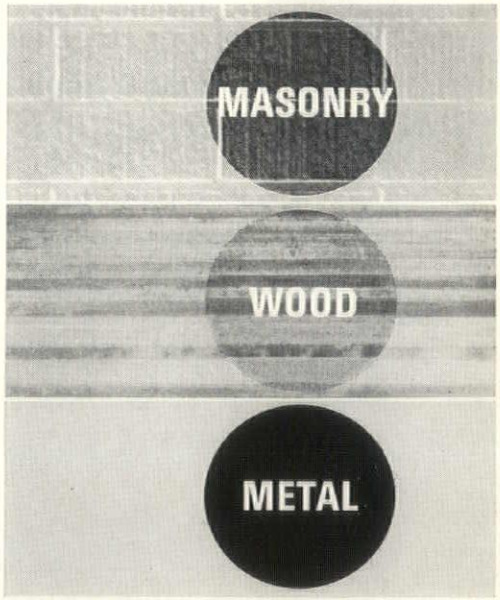

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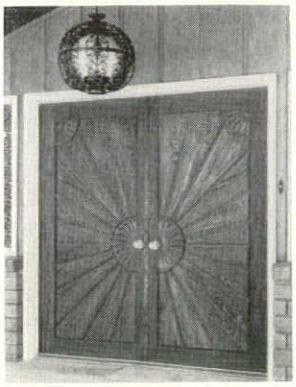

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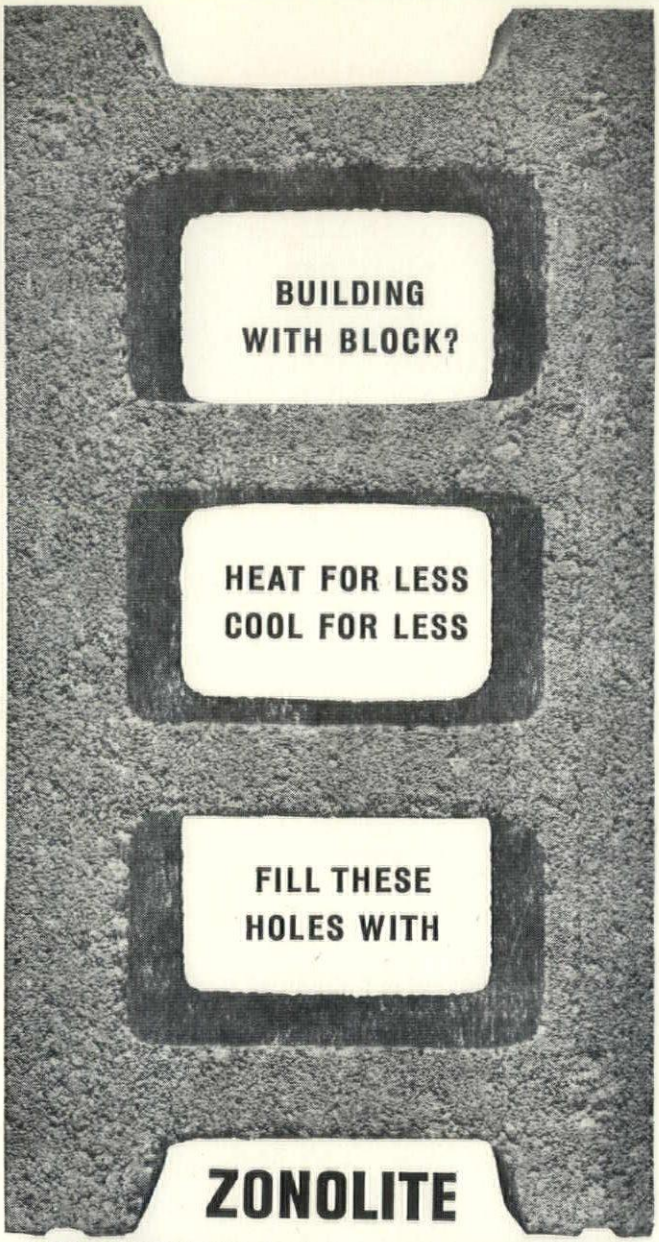

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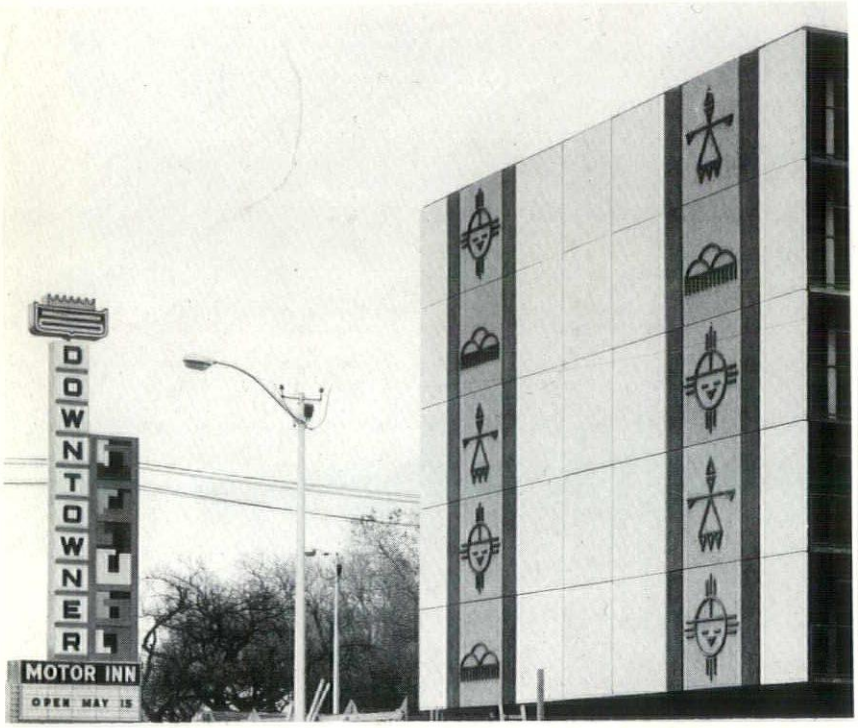

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